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THE CARRARA MEDALS





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THE CARRARA MEDALS.

OBVERSES.

THE
CARRARA MEDALS,

WITH NOTICES

OF THE

DUKES OF PADUA, WHOSE EFFIGIES THEY BEAR.

BY

W. T. R. MARVIN.

MEMBER OF THE BOSTON NUMISMATIC SOCIETY, THE BOSTON ANTIQUARIAN CLUB, HON. MEMBER OF
THE AMERICAN NUMISMATIC AND ARCHÆOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW YORK,
COR. MEMBER OF THE NUMISMATIC AND ANTIQUARIAN
SOCIETY OF PHILADELPHIA, ETC., ETC.

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THE following descriptions of the Carrara Medals are reprinted, with some additions and a few slight changes, from the American Journal of Numismatics for January, 1880.

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THE CARRARA MEDALS.



HE Carrara Medals have always been regarded with a peculiar interest by collectors, and there are probably but very few complete sets in American cabinets. The illustrations which accompany this paper were made from a series in the collection of Mr. Thomas Warner, of Cohocton, N.Y., though the limits of the page make it necessary to reduce the apparent size of the pieces. The originals measure from 44 to 46 nearly, American scale. They were probably struck in the early part of the fifteenth century, and while the artist who cut them is not certainly known, they have generally been attributed to Marco Sesto. By some numismatists they are believed to have been cast, and then carefully finished by tooling. However this may be, they are among the earliest productions of the Renaissance in Italy, and possess an interest of their own for that reason, aside from their historic value. They are classed among the so-called "restored Medals" by Bolzenthall, who says "many of them are thought to have been caused to be struck in the *sixteenth* century, by the Papafava family, which sprang from the house of Carrara."*

For some reason which I have been unable to discover, Francesco I. was styled "Grand Master" in the catalogue of a sale some years ago, when a partial set of these Medals was first offered to American collectors, and on that account they have occasionally been classed among Masonics, but erroneously, as was shown by the writer, in the *American Journal of Numismatics*, Vol. X, p. 94. The name does not appear among the

* See *American Journal of Numismatics*, Vol. XIII., p. 4.

Grand Masters of the Knights of St. John, and the Medals have nothing whatever to do with Freemasonry.

Although bearing various dates, they were doubtless all struck about the same time,—probably by some descendant of the family, and perhaps by order of Marsiglio, the son of the last duke of his name, Francis II.,—to commemorate the fame and unhappy fortunes of his ancestors. The legends on the Medals were kindly sent me by Mr. Warner.

The family whose principal members they commemorate, were prominent in the quarrels which form so large a part of the history of the petty republics and cities of Italy, and first acquired power in the early part of the fourteenth century. In the long continued strife between the Guelph and Ghibellines, they generally espoused the side of the former; and though the distinctive grounds of their dispute had long passed away, the old names continued to be used through the times of the earlier Dukes of Padua, which was the title borne by the Carraras. With the powerful family of the Visconti they were by turns friends and foes; and from their enmity and that of Venice, at last received a final blow from which they never recovered.

For most of the facts relating to their history I am indebted to Hoeffler's "*Nouvelle Biographie Universelle*," and to the *Cyclopedia* of Pierre Larousse. For accounts of the quarrels in which they were engaged, see also Sismondi's *Histoire des Republiques Italiennes*, and Daru's *Histoire de la Republique de Venise*.

GIACOMO—IL GRANDE.

Obv. Bust to right, draped; an oriental cap tied under the chin. IACOBVS GRANDIS DE CARRARIA · I · PATAVII · D · AN · MCCCXVIII. Rev. The arms of the Carrara family; the helmet, which has the visor closed, is facing, and bears a crest, similar to the device on the arms, from which fall on either side of the shield, branches of ivy (?) · OBIIT ANN · DO · MCCC · XXIII · Size 45. (Figure 1.)

Giacomo or James, first Duke of Padua, is considered the founder of his family: having overturned the magistracy of the city, he proclaimed himself Duke, in 1318, and the title was confirmed to his successors by treaty in 1338. Another James, just a century before, had, with Azzo of Este, unsuccessfully attacked the city. He was in some sense a vassal of Frederic, Duke of Austria, from whom he received aid against his life-long rival, Cane de la Scala, Duke of Verona. He died Nov. 21, 1324.

NICOLO.

Obv. Bust to left, wearing a banded turban and a closed vest. NICOLAVS DE CARRARIA · II · TERRITORII · PAT · D · AN · MDCCCXXIII · Rev. Arms somewhat similar to the preceding: the helmet and shield partly concealed by drapery, opened and turned back, along the border of which is a chain, and the crest, which resembles the charges on the arms, is placed between two horns. OBIT · ANNO · DO · MCCCXXVI · Size 44. (Figure 2.)

This nobleman was a brother of the preceding, and for a time reigned jointly with Marsiglio, though represented on the Medal as governing the *territory*, not the city. He finally quarrelled with the latter, because of the oppressions of some German allies of Nicolo's, and was dethroned.

MARSIGLIO.

Obv. Bust to right in flowing cowl; the vest buttoned on the shoulder. MARSILIVS MAIOR DE CAR · II · PAT · D · ANN · MCCC · XXIII · Rev. Arms covered with ivy, the shield and helmet similar to the preceding; the latter has a bear above it as a crest. The drooping leaves around it are laden with flowers, similar to the device on the arms. OBIT · ANN · MCCCXXXVIII · DIE · XXI · MARTII · Size 44. (Figure 3.)

Marsiglio was the nephew of Giacomo. Having made an enemy of his uncle Nicolo, as already mentioned, he sought a reconciliation with Cane de la Scala, and finally transferred to him the sovereignty of Padua. Some time after, he quarrelled with Albert, the son of Cane, and threw himself into the arms of the Venetians and Florentines, who enabled him to regain his power August 7, 1337. He was killed March 21, 1338, as appears on the Medal, though according to other authorities the date is given as September 22.

UBERTINO.

Obv. Bust facing left, the head covered with flowing drapery; the vest closed, with high collar buttoned on the side of the throat. VBERTINVS DE CHARRARIA TERCIVS · D · PADVAE · Rev. Arms similar to the last, with helmet and shield partly covered with drapery, but instead of the crest and horns, a winged bust with satyr-head, having goat's horns and ears. OBIT · ANN · MCCCXLV · DIE · XXVIII · MARTII · Size 44. (Figure 4.)

Ubertino was a nephew (one authority says he was a distant cousin) of Marsiglio, whom he succeeded, and was distinguished only for his cruelties and debaucheries. His

claims were recognized by Marsiglio de la Scala, to whose family his uncle had transferred the Seigniorship of Padua, and the sovereignty of the city was restored to him, thereby greatly offending Venice.

MARSIGLIETTO.

Obv. Bust, three-quarters facing to right ; the top of the head bare, with drapery at the side fastened by a band across the forehead, the vest closely buttoned at the throat. MARSILIETVS PAPAFAVA DE CAR · IIII · PAT · D · ANN · MCCCXLV · Rev. Arms, with helmet and shield draped with leaves as on I. and III. : the crest is a bear. The shield is quartered, having the Carrara arms in 1 and 4, and a lion rampant in 2 and 3. INTERFECT · AN · MCCCXLV · DIE · VI · MAII · Size 44. (Figure 5.)

Papafava was the family name, but was seldom used. Marsiglietto is said by some to have been a descendant of a collateral branch. His reign lasted but a few weeks, and he was assassinated by Giacomo, (son of Nicolo.)

GIACOMO—IL MINORE.

Obv. Bust to left in a draped hood. IACOBVS MINOR DE CARR · V · PATA · VII · D · ANN · M · CCC · XLV · Rev. Arms similar to I., having leaves falling on either side, as on that, but a different crest above the helmet. · INTER · FECT · ANN · MCCCL · DIE XVIII IVL · Size 45. (Figure 6.)

Giacomo the Second succeeded in preserving the secret of his kinsman's death, until he had secured the seals of office and the fortresses of the territory ; he then claimed the sovereignty as his of right, and was proclaimed Duke by the people. He is said to have shown greater wisdom and moderation than any of his predecessors, but was finally assassinated by an illegitimate son of one of his uncles, whose excesses he was striving to repress.

GIACOMINO.

Obv. Bust to right, in a draped hood. IACOBINVS DE CARR · VI · PATA · VII · DO · ANNO · M · CCCL · Rev. Arms as on the preceding, but a still different crest. The arms, helmet and foliage of this and the preceding are more nearly like those on I. in general style, having few if any blossoms in the foliage. OBIIT ANN · MCCC · LVII · Size 45. (Figure 7.)

Giacomino, (or Jacopino, as the name is sometimes spelled), was a brother of the preceding Duke, whom he succeeded jointly with Francesco, the son of Giacomo II. After five years of perfect harmony between them, the latter discovered that his uncle was plotting his destruction, and dethroned and imprisoned him in 1355.

FRANCESCO I.

Obv. Naked bust to right, the head bare, and showing to the waist. FRANCISCVS · SENIOR · DE · CARRARIA · D · PAD · Rev. Head of a satyr-winged bust to left, with flowing drapery, enclosing the shield with the family device, and MEMO on a scroll, and an ox kneeling below; H H in the field on each side. QVI · SVM · CIVI · BENI · REXIT · AN · XXXVII · M · VIII · D · V · Size 45. (Figure 8.)

Francesco I. reigned, as mentioned above, for five years conjointly with his uncle Giacomino, and alone, after 1355. In 1354 he commanded the army of the Lombard League. In his wars with the Visconti he met with various successes and reverses, finally arousing the enmity of the Republic of Venice, on account of the aid he rendered to Louis of Hungary, who invaded their territory, as a result of which he was compelled to accept a humiliating peace. Soon after he allied himself with the Genoese and the King of Hungary, and took part in the war of Chiozza, (1378-81,) which brought Venice to the brink of ruin. In the year 1388 that city formed an alliance with the Visconti, the Marquis of Ferrara, and the Lord of Mantua, against him. His city was attacked and captured, May 19, 1388, and by the perfidy of Giovanni Galeazzo Visconti, he was despoiled of all his possessions, which he had greatly enlarged, and confined in the castle of Como, where he died, October 16, 1393.

FRANCESCO II.

Obv. Draped bust to left, the head bare. FRANCISCVS IVNIOR DE CARR · VIII · PATAVII · D · ANN · MCCCXC · Rev. Satyr-like figure as on the preceding, enclosing the Carrara arms, below which is a quartered globe, surmounted by a scroll, on which LEVXANZA. DIE XIX IAN · NECAT · AN · MCCCCVI · Size 45. (Figure 9.)

Francis II. was the son of Francis I. After his father's overthrow he traveled extensively through Northern Italy and Germany, forming alliances by which he regained Padua in June, 1390. After a war of two years he obliged his enemies to acknowledge his claims, and he restored for a short period the power of his family. Having invaded Verona in 1404, he was attacked by Venice, losing his city, October 21, 1405. Taken captive with his children, he was imprisoned at Venice, and there assassinated by order of the Council of Ten, January 19, 1406. Some authorities say that he was strangled: the word NECATUS may be taken to imply that the manner of his death was a disgrace to those who caused it. One of his sons, Marsiglio, vainly endeavored to regain Padua, but at last perished on the scaffold, and with him ended the ducal house of Carrara, though collateral branches bearing the family name of Papafava, still survive.

I have followed the dates on the Medals in preference to those given by the authorities from which the historical notes have been compiled, as seeming to have the greater probability of accuracy. The death of Francesco II. for instance is given by Woodward & Gates, *Encyclopedia of Chronology*, as February 17, 1406. The true date was very likely kept secret, as the "Council of Ten" surrounded all their acts with mystery.

There is still another Medal, an impression of which is in the cabinet of Mr. A. Balmanno, one of the Vice Presidents of the American Numismatic and Archæological Society of New York, and which is considered by some numismatists to bear a certain relation to the Carrara series. A full account of this piece is given by Bolzenthall, in a work cited by Dr. Anthon, and a translation of which is printed, with a cut of the Medal, in the *American Journal of Numismatics*, Vol. XIII., pp. 4 and 5. To this we refer those who care to pursue the subject, only calling attention to the fact that it would appear from this passage that there are others still, having reference to Francesco Carrara the younger, and to the closing remark of the article, from which we infer that a portion if not all of these are of such "recent origin that Brunati, who has collected the memorials of the Carrara family with diligence and success, rejects them without hesitation."



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